

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
401 Market Street, Fourth Floor  
Camden, New Jersey 08101

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***Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney***

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## Camden Man Pleads Guilty to String of Armed Bank Robberies

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(More)

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CAMDEN – A Camden man pleaded guilty today for his role in a string of gunpoint bank robberies, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Walter Johnson, 33, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler to one count of conspiracy to commit robbery and one count of carrying and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence. Judge Kugler continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for March 15, 2007.

At his plea hearing, Johnson admitted that between December 2005 and September 2006, he and his co-conspirator, Steven Gantt, 40, of Camden, conspired to commit a series of bank robberies. As part of the conspiracy, the defendants attempted to conceal their identities by wearing gloves, masks and head coverings and stole automobiles to travel to and flee from the banks, Johnson admitted. Johnson admitted that during the bank robberies they were armed with guns and took control over customers and bank employees by threats and use of physical violence, including the pointing of firearms at victims.

Johnson admitted that he and his co-conspirator stole U.S. currency from banks as follows:

•	Dec. 2, 2005	Commerce Bank, Bellmawr	\$12,129
•	Feb. 2, 2006	Commerce Bank, Bellmawr	\$12,845
•	March 7, 2006	Commerce Bank, Cherry Hill	\$2,226
•	May 30, 2006	Commerce Bank, Sicklerville,	\$8,900
•	July 21, 2006	Commerce Bank, Mount Holly	\$4,945
•	March 25, 2006	Commerce Bank, Camden	\$12,350
•	April 22, 2006	PNC Bank, Cherry Hill	\$20,500

Johnson also admitted that he had learned that Gantt stole U.S. currency from banks as follows:

•	Dec. 15, 2005	Commerce Bank, Gloucester Twp.	\$25,963
•	Aug. 1, 2006	Commerce Bank, York, PA	\$34,000

On Aug. 23, Johnson and Gantt were arrested in Camden on state charges as a result of an eight-month investigation by the FBI, Camden County Prosecutor's Office, and the police departments of Bellmawr, Camden, Cherry Hill, and Gloucester Township. The U.S. Attorney's Office adopted the case for federal prosecution.

Gantt is pending trial before Judge Kugler, but a date has not been scheduled.

The charge of conspiracy to commit robbery carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the aggregate loss to the victims or gain to the

defendants. The count of carrying and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence carries a statutory mandatory minimum prison sentence of 10 years and a maximum term of life, to be served consecutively to the sentence imposed on Count One.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Kugler will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's South Jersey Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis in Philadelphia, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Acting Prosecutor James P. Lynch, the Bellmawr Police Department, under the direction of Chief William Walsh, the Camden Police Department, under the direction of Police Executive Arturo Venegas, the Cherry Hill Police Department, under the direction of Chief Charlie Jones, and the Gloucester Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief Edward S. Smith, with the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Carle of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Martin Isenberg, Esq. Gibbsboro